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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 THESSALONIKI 000052

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NOMINATION: THE 2010 SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL
WOMAN OF COURAGE

REF: (A) STATE 00111471, (B) STATE 016553

1A. FULL NAME OF NOMINEE: VALBONA HYSTUNA

1B. JOB TITLE/ASSOCIATION: SOCIAL INVESTIGATOR / FAMILY
COUNSELOR, "ARSIS" - SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHER, GREEK /
ALBANIAN

1C. DATE OF BIRTH: JANUARY 14, 1972 (01/14/72)

1D. COUNTRY OF BIRTH: ALBANIA

1E. CITIZENSHIP: ALBANIAN

1F. PASSPORT NUMBER: Z1131411

1G. HOME ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE: 21, MADITOU STR., 56727,
THESSALONIKI. TEL: (+30) 693 285 5699

1H. STATEMENT BY POST:

Post nominates Mrs. Valbona Hystuna for the Secretary's Award
for International Women of Courage (IWOC.)

Mrs. Hystuna is a woman who arrived in Greece with her husband
and little daughter thirteen years ago with literally no
possessions, no knowledge of the language and no other family or
social connections. After being occupied in different forms of
manual work for a short while, she began working for the NGO
Arsis as a social investigator -"street worker"- for trafficked
children, identifying them on the streets and referring them to
the appropriate authorities, so that a proper care plan could be
devised for them. In cases of need for services that Arsis
could provide, Mrs. Hystuna herself offered the necessary
support. Also, she visited detention centers where minors were
held, coordinated their repatriation process and, in cases of
Albanian minors, occasionally accompanied them herself to the
border to ensure their safe arrival and reunification with their
families and/or social state representatives. She has been
working in this field for about ten years now and has become an
almost emblematic figure, due to her persistence, consistency
and the positive results she has had so far.

Her activities have, of course, angered child traffickers and exploiting parents who have repeatedly targeted and threatened her but she has remained unfazed and has continued with added determination and zest.

Another aspect of her work is that with the Albanian community. For the last three years, she has been working as a teacher in multicultural schools, teaching young Albanians modern Greek and also, through the Albanian Immigrants Association "Mother Teresa," she has been teaching Albanian to children of immigrants that were born in Greece and are looking to establish a connection with their parental roots. Lastly, she recently received a scholarship to study for an MBA at Anatolia College Thessaloniki (she holds a BA in Literature and Languages.)

This year's nominee is someone who arrived in a foreign land literally on foot and managed to carry out for a number of years the bulk of the field work of the fight against child trafficking in Thessaloniki. Additionally, she has been helping the integration of the 200-plus members of the Albanian community - mainly women - who participate in her classes, also providing them with psycho-social, as well as practical support. Her work has had important and documented results, she has repeatedly featured in the local press and is a regular interlocutor of post.

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In post's opinion, this is an important nomination as Mrs. Hystuna epitomizes the virtues of a selfless and courageous anti-trafficking worker operating in the face of danger and intimidation. Likewise, she has demonstrated the will to survive and to make a positive contribution to the environment of the immigrant. By awarding her, not only do we celebrate her character and personality but, in her face, we highlight the plight of child trafficking, as well as the efforts of the usually unsung immigrant women to make a new start, often in particularly adverse circumstances.

I. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE U.S.:

None

J. WORK EXPERIENCE:

2003-Present: Social Investigator / Family Counselor in the Thessaloniki NGO "Arsis"

Nominee's duties included searching for and approaching of street children, referral of the children to the appropriate institutions, follow-up of progress for many years on occasions.

Also, for children referred to "Arsis," the nominee herself provided part of the services offered, such as family counseling, psychological support and evening tuition for the children. Finally, she regularly visited detention centers for Albanian minors, coordinated their safe repatriation and occasionally accompanied them personally to the Greek-Albanian border.

2006-2008: Secondary Education Teacher of Modern Greek

Part-time position, in the context of the project "Integration of Alien and Repatriated Children into the Secondary Education System", Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

2003-2004: Primary Education Teacher of Modern Greek

Part-time position, in the context of the project "Strengthened Tuition in Modern Greek for Alien and Repatriated Children", Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

1994-1995: Secondary Education Teacher of Albanian

Part-time position, Albanian state education system.

K. EDUCATION:

1990-1994: BA in Albanian Literature, School of Social Sciences, University of Shkodra, Albania

2009-ongoing: MBA candidate, Anatolia College Thessaloniki (ACT), Greece

L. SEMINARS/CONFERENCES:

- Itrre, Belgium, October 19-23, 2009. Conference, "Social Street Work - Training for Trainers". Nominee's presentation was on the "Influence of Stereotypes on Closed Communities".

- Struga, Republic of Macedonia, July 23-25, 2008. Seminar, "New Options for Teaching the Albanian Language to the (Albanian) Diaspora". Organized by the Albanian and Kosovo Ministries of Education.

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- Thessaloniki, Greece, May 03, 2007. Conference, "Proposals and Good Practices for the Integration of Immigrants". Nominee's presentation was entitled "Aims and Objectives of the Association of Albanian Immigrants Mother Teresa".

-Thessaloniki, Greece, October 11, 2006. Seminar, "Ombudsmen for Children's Rights in SouthEastern Europe" .Organized by the Greek Ombudsman with the support of NGO ARSIS and the Bar Association of Thessaloniki.

-Tirana, Albania, September 18-20, 2006. Second Regional Roundtable (SouthEastern and Central Europe), "Making Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings Effective: Building Regional and Local Capacity of Roma Communities". Nominee's presentation was on " The Nature of Trafficking: Aspects of the Phenomenon that Affect the Roma Communities". Organized by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in co-operation with the OSCE Presence in Albania.

-Athens, Greece, May 17, 2005. Seminar, "Prevention and Fighting of Human Trafficking in the Mediterranean Region - International Co-operation". Organized by the IOM with the support of the Greek Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Health, as well as the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

-Thessaloniki, Greece, February 15, 2005. Seminar, "Trafficking in Human Beings: Law Enforcement and Transnational Co-operation". Organized by the Stability Pact for SouthEastern Europe with the support of the US Consulate General in Thessaloniki.

-Tirana, Albania, February 2-5, 2004. Seminar, "Child Protection Procedures and Support Materials". Organized by the Swiss NGO Terre des Hommes.

Candidate was notified of the nomination and is willing to accept the award if chosen.

A. POST ACTION OFFICER:

Consul General Catherine E. Kay, email: Kayce@state.gov
KAY